

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 5-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 13 and 18 are amended and claims 2-4 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the September 12 telephone conference is gratefully appreciated. The Examiner's permission to file a Supplemental Amendment is gratefully acknowledged.

Applicants gratefully appreciate the indication that claim 4 is allowable.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claims 1, 7, 12 and 20 because of informalities. Independent claim 1 was amended in the May 19, 2006 Amendment After Final Rejection and now overcomes the informalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to the claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Mishra et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,300,986); claims 13-23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Walsh et al. ("The Negative Corona Distribution for a Long Pin to Plane Geometry"); claims 2-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mishra in view of Croskey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 2,890,388); claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mishra in view of Croskey and Darty (U.S. Patent No.

6,899,854); and claims 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mishra in view of Croskey and Yonekawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,208,499). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The incorporation of the allowable subject matter of claim 4 into independent claims 1, 13 and 18 renders independent claims 1, 13 and 18 allowable. Thus, independent claims 1, 13 and 18, and their dependent claims, are patentable over a combination of the applied references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 5-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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